

assumption which has no ground in reason or fact. Before such a statement can be properly made, an historical investigation of the conditions existing there and then must be made impartially and with a simple desire to know the truth. In our interpretation we too often assume that Paul had us in mind as much as he had the particular church or individual to whom his letters were written. But such is a superficial view of the inspiration of Scripture. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians and the other churches, he had in mind the exact conditions existing there. And his letters were applications of universal principles to special conditions.

With these general observations let us look at the Scriptures with which we began this article.

Is it a principle of universal application that women must keep silence in church, not even allowed to ask a question? If it is, why have the churches departed so widely from the observance of this command from the Lord? If it is not, why is it not, and how is the Scripture to be explained?

I do not believe that command one of universal application. I believe the church has shown its common sense in practically treating it as a special command, i. e., of limited or particular application.

I desire to say, however, that I believe it is a command from the Lord and that it was obligatory on the churches to whom it was given and all others similarly situated. How, then, explain it? Simply on the principle of adaptation of the Divine Will to the varying conditions of humanity. Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse, Athens, Thessalonica and many others were Greek cities as to their culture and customs. Among the Greeks and those of Greek civilization, woman was an inferior being. The only women who enjoyed educational privileges and became the intellectual equals of men were the Hetairae, or the "loose women" of Greek civilization. Hence, they only were fitted intellectually to discuss with men the questions of the day. Hence, also they were the only ones who appeared in public places, such as theatres or assembly rooms without the sign of subjection to man, which was the oriental veil, a covering which hid the face and head from the gaze of men and which is used by Mohammedan women even to this day. And since they were the only ones who discussed with men the questions which occupied the attention of that day, it was supposed that any one who came forth and took part in public discussions or asked questions in a public gathering was a woman who had no respect for her reputation. It is very evident, therefore, that our Lord should command thru Paul that Christian women, who lived where such ideas ruled the conduct of women, should observe the silence which characterized all virtuous women among the peoples who had a Greek civilization.

In the eleventh chapter of the First Letter to the Corinthians Paul makes an exception to this rule in case of women who prayed or

prophesied. Now, for women to pray and prophesy publicly was a new thing among Greeks, but the early church considered it a gift not to be quenched even by Greek women, hence, Paul commands that when they pray or prophesy, they shall show their subjection to their husbands, or if unmarried, to man in the abstract, by wearing the covering which was the sign of subjection and chastity.

But public discussion and questioning was considered beneath the chaste woman, hence Paul commanded them not to do it.

Why does it not apply to us? Because those ideas no longer rule civilization. Ours is not a Greek civilization governed by false ideas of woman's inferiority, but a Christian civilization instinct with the Christian idea that "there is neither male nor female" in the church of Christ. This was a special command limited in its application to a condition which has since been removed and is no more obligatory on the conscience of the modern Christian than Paul's opinion in the same letter that it were better for Christians not to marry on account of "the present distress," i. e. the awful persecutions of that fearful time. Common sense must be used in the interpretation of these letters of Paul. It is wrong to apply a command suited to a special need, to a people or a civilization where that special need no longer exists. Those who do so "wrest the scriptures to their own destruction."

A MEAN TRAIT

C. H. WETHERBE

There is scarcely a meaner trait in human beings than ingratitude. It is the mark of a very low appreciation of what has been done for one in the hour of his need. There are but few things which are more trying to the soul of one who has put heart and strong effort into aiding a person when he despaired of help on every hand, than to receive from that person the plainest evidence that he possessed no spirit of real thankfulness for the favor which was rendered to him.

The *Christian Advocate* of Nashville, Tenn., says: "The world has long ago set the seal of its condemnation on the man who is capable of deliberate ingratitude. Whoever accepts a favor when he needs it, and repudiates the obligation when his need has passed away, proves himself to be a very small and narrow soul. But this is a thing which often happens. There are thousands of people who have climbed up to high positions and then kicked down the ladders by which they arose, and also sneered at the friends by whom the ladders were held. Such conduct deserves to be held in hearty contempt. Have you ever been guilty of it?" Perhaps I may be permitted to refer to some personal experience. There is a minister, who, several years ago, was very desirous to have me assist him in securing another pastorate. He was then pastor of a church in Illinois, and his request for my help was

made several months before the expiration of his term of service for that church. He stated that he wished to return East. He had been receiving a salary of one thousand dollars besides the use of the parsonage. I at once made effort to secure him another pastorate. I wrote to many churches in his behalf, but did not succeed in securing him a hearing before any church until a few months after his term there expired. His church very kindly arranged for him to supply it for awhile after his year closed. During this time I often wrote to him as inspiring and cheering letters as I knew how, for I suspected that he was discouraged. Finally two churches, at the same time, sent for him to visit them with a view to settling, and to both of them I had heartily recommended him. He visited both, and then settled as pastor with one of them. For a while he expressed gratitude for my service, and then he abruptly quit corresponding with me, with no explanation and no ground for it that I could see, and for years he has refused to let me know his whereabouts. He is only one among many who make use of friends for what they can get out of them.

SPIRIT OF ADOPTION. Rom. 8:15

JOHN NICHOLSON

It is not uncommon, when standing by the side of a flowing river, to be anxious to ascertain its source and to know all concerning its progress.

Salvation may be thus likened to a stream, and in the book of Revelation we are instructed in all that relates to its rise and channel and course. The love of God is its source, the merits of Jesus its channel and in its course there is, first the redemption of the world, then the justification of the believer, then the regeneration of those who are justified, afterwards the adoption of the regenerate into the divine family, then their growth and advancement in sanctification. Finally the stream goes to its native source and terminates in the ocean of the presence of God, where the angels rejoice for evermore.

We have now come to that part of the saving stream called adoption. Adoption is the translation of a child out of one family into another, and was practiced by the Romans and Grecians when childless, adopted some other child and gave it the family name and also the title to the family inheritance. Such is natural adoption. Spiritual adoption is that act of grace by which God takes the children of the wicked one out of this world and makes them the sons and daughters of His spiritual family.

The points of resemblance between natural and spiritual adoption are these: In adoption, they cease to have their former name and are designated after the name of God who adopted them; then sinners, aliens and rebels, but now children of God and joint heirs with Christ. Natural adoption was to supply a family defect, because there